**PARENT NEWSLETTER**

**March 2014**

What do you know about MDMA, aka Ecstasy or Molly?

There are many other names for this man-made drug including “E,” “XTC,” “X,” “Clarity,” “Lover’s Speed,” and “Love Drug.” Generally in pill, tablet or capsule form, these drugs can be various colors and sometimes have cartoon-like images on them.

Molly can be addictive to some people and it isn’t uncommon for students to take more than one pill at a time. The “highs” commonly last from three to six hours, but takes only 15 minutes to enter the bloodstream. The high begins within the first hour after it is ingested.

In the beginning a person feels very hyper. Some lose a sense of time and might experience an enhanced sense of touch or other misperceptions. Others experience a negative effect such as becoming agitated or anxious. People may begin sweating excessively or suffer from the chills. Still others report feeling faint or dizzy.

This MDMA has other side effects including muscle tension, nausea, blurred vision and increased heart rate and blood pressure. Often people experience clenching or grinding of their teeth. After taking just one pill people may experience extreme sadness, depression, anxiety or even memory loss. These effects could last up to several days. The DEA also reports that “high doses of MDMA can interfere with the ability to regulate body temperature, resulting in a sharp increase in body temperature (hyperthermia), leading to liver, kidney, and cardiovascular failure. Severe dehydration can result from the combination of the drug’s effects and the crowded, hot conditions in which the drug is often taken.”

Information from: [**http://teens/drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/mdma-ecstasy-or-molly**](http://teens/drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/mdma-ecstasy-or-molly)

**Help Your Child to Get Better Grades**

Here’s some advice to help your child get better grades in every class. Perhaps they will need gentle reminders from you in order to remember to follow these suggestions.

* Send them to school, every day, on time. To get good grades, you have to be there to understand the material and learn new things. Of course, don’t send them when they are sick!
* Remind them that the teachers are in charge and make the rules. They just have to adapt to what the teacher says. If Mr. Jones says no gum in his class, then don’t chew gum. If Ms. Smith doesn’t allow students to wear hats indoors, then they need to take them off.
* Make sure your child is prepared for each class. Do they have their pens, books, and homework ready for the next day? Homework reinforces the skills or information they are supposed to be learning each day. Much of their high school grades still depend on homework grades. Help them to understand that this work is what they must do each day, just like you have work to do every day.
* One thing your child might not be aware of is his/her body language. Ask them if they are paying attention in each class and not doing assignments for another class, passing notes, rolling their eyes, or audibly sighing.
* Learning to work in a group is great preparation for real-world jobs. They need to do their share of the projects, try new ideas, and support their fellow group members.
* Encourage them to participate in class. Ask questions. Answer questions. It makes the time pass more quickly if they are actively engaged in the lessons. Participation may also raise their grades.
* Be respectful. Remind them of the golden rule to treat others the way they would like to be treated.
* Be available to help your student with homework or to participate in a discussion of what they did at school that day. Are they reading a new book? Did they learn some historical fact that interests you? Are they having problems with someone in class? Stay involved.
* Praise your student when they earn good grades. If he or she has been getting D’s on his or her algebra tests and suddenly brings home a C, that’s cause for celebration! Encourage them to do their best and give them positive feedback when they do.

**Upcoming GEAR UP events**

**Making Sense of Financial Aid** NMU Financial Aid Counselor, Jeff Gagnon, will talk about the financial aid process, how to get a head-start on financial planning for higher education, and will answer your questions about the whole process.

Wednesday March 19 6 pm Hedgcock 2303 on NMU’s campus

Refreshments provided



**Spring Break Campus Tour:** Your student can visit six (6) college campuses downstate during their spring break. Your student will need to be at the Peter White Lounge in the University Center at NMU at 8 AM on Sunday, March 30. The will return on Thursday, April 3 at 6 PM. GEAR UP will pay for all transportation, meals, hotel rooms and chaperones for this trip. Snacks will also be provided. They may be stopping at a mall, so you may want to send spending money, but it is not required for any necessities. You should have received an application form in the mail. If you need another one, please let us know. This trip is ONLY for current freshmen. The students at North Star Academy will be joined by students from Lake Superior State University’s GEAR UP program.



**Summer Camp** Summer Camps dates are set for June 22-28. Students will spend part of the time on NMU’s campus and then will travel to Mackinac Island to tour Fort Mackinac and visit other campuses down state. Plans are incomplete at this time, but you may want to mark these dates on your calendar. Once again we will be joined by students from Lake Superior State University’s GEAR UP program.



For more information about these events, please contact either of these GEAR UP representatives:

Shirley Brozzo, GEAR UP Director at NMU

Or

Meredith Waara, GEAR UP Student Coordinator

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